

Setting Goals Using the SMART Acronym

S

S = SPECIFIC

- A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. Provide enough detail so that there is no indecision as to what exactly the participant should be doing. An example of a general goal would be, *"Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables."* But a specific goal would say, *"Increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day."*

M

M = MEASURABLE

- Choose a goal with measurable progress so the participant can see the change as it occurs. A measurable goal has an outcome that can be assessed either on a sliding scale (1-10), or as a hit or miss, success or failure. Based on our example, *"Increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day"* would be a measurable goal because we are measuring if the participant consumed a serving of fruits and vegetables at one meal per day.

A

A = ATTAINABLE/ACHIEVABLE

- An achievable goal has an outcome that is realistic given the participant's current social, economic, or cultural resources and time available. Goal achievement may be more of a "stretch" if the outcome is difficult to begin with. Our example of a goal was to *"Increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day."* Is consuming a serving of fruits and vegetables at one meal per day possible for the participant? If not, then this would not be an attainable goal.

R

R = REALISTIC

- Start small with what the participant can and will do. Let the participant experience the joys of meeting their goal. Gradually increase the intensity of the goal after having a discussion with the participant, parent or caretaker to redefine the goal. Is our example goal *"Increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day"* realistic for a WIC participant's food budget? If not, then we might want to redefine the goal.

T

T = TIME BOUND

- Set a timeframe for the goal (e.g., a week, three (3) months, six (6) months). Setting an end point for the goal gives the participant a clear target to achieve. Nutrition follow-up ideally should occur prior to the mid-certification (best practice) but shall occur within one (1) year or prior to the participant's change in categorical status.

Goal setting is a process of determining what the participant's goals are, working towards them, and assessing whether their goals are met. A prevalent process for setting participant-centered nutrition and/or health goal(s) uses the SMART acronym.

Remember that follow-up is an essential component of WIC value enhanced nutrition services provided for the benefit of program participants. Follow-up should be provided to find out how the participant has addressed a nutrition issue, but should not replace a nutrition education contact/intervention.